

Castlemaine Naturalist

March 2024

Vol. 49.2 #528

Monthly newsletter of the
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.



Nicole Kearney (Manager BHL Australia) admiring books in the Teylers Museum Library in Haarlem (the oldest museum in the Netherlands).

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) and Victoria's Field Naturalists Clubs

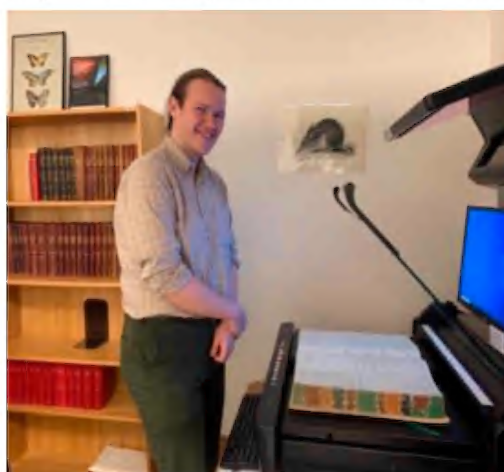
By Nicole Kearney, Manager BHL Australia

On Friday 9 February, I had the honour of speaking to members of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club about the [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#) (BHL) and our exciting new project: *Capturing the History of Victoria's Field Naturalists Clubs*.

The BHL is the world's largest online library of biodiversity literature and archival material. It consists of over 61 million pages, which have been contributed by 590 libraries and publishers across the world. This incredible resource contains information on millions and millions of the world's species. All of this information – this foundation of our understanding of biodiversity – is freely accessible online for everyone.

[BHL Australia](#), which began operation in 2010 with a single organisation (Museums Victoria), has now grown to a national consortium of 50 contributors, including Australia's museums, herbaria, state libraries, royal societies, government agencies and field naturalist clubs.

In 2023, BHL Australia received two grants to gather the history of Victoria's field naturalist clubs and to share the invaluable contribution these community organisations have made to Victoria's ecological and social heritage: 1) a [Public Record Office Victoria \(PROV\) Local History Grant](#) to fund the digitisation of the legacy publications of Victoria's naturalists' clubs and the creation of an online collection on the BHL website; and 2) a [Wikimedia Australia Partner Grant](#) to fund the creation of Wikipedia pages and Wikidata records



Jack Eastaugh (BHL Digitisation Technician) at the 600 dpi color digitisation overhead scanner.

for each club, as well as for their significant people, places, events and species across time.



Marina Hart (BHL Library Data Officer) working on one of Museums Victoria's Collection Register from the mid-1800s (every specimen that came into the collection was manually recorded in these registers).

The FNCs involved in the project thus far include Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, LaTrobe Valley, Peninsula, Ringwood and Castlemaine. Over the past few months, BHL Australia has been digitising older back issues of the '*Castlemaine Naturalist*' and uploading both these and the more recent born digital PDFs onto the BHL website. After our talk for the Castlemaine FNC, Jack Eastaugh (BHL Australia's Digitisation Technician) and I returned to Melbourne with a precious box of *Castlemaine Naturalist* back issues (1976-2008) to digitise in our digitisation lab at the Melbourne Museum. You will see these appearing on the BHL website over the coming months.

Progress on the 'Capturing the history of Victoria's Field Naturalists Clubs' project can be tracked via our [BHL Australia](#) page on the BHL website. The

Castlemaine Naturalist can be found on BHL [here](#).

CFNC Excursion 10/02/2024 – Mt Alexander

The location for the excursion was selected to take advantage of the higher altitude and temperatures that would be a few degrees lower than in Castlemaine. The group



The CFNC Group on excursion at Mt. Alexander.

Photo: Lou Citroen

of 15 assembled at the Leanganook Picnic Ground for a short walk along Leanganook Track towards Dog Rocks.

January 2024 had been exceptionally wet. The rains had freshened the vegetation with some plants that would normally have finished flowering for the season having a second round of flowering (see list below).

The group stopped at the granite rocks, just short of Dog Rocks where we had extensive views over Harcourt and further west to the

Pyrenees Range in the far distance. It was at these rocks that we also found the Rock (Showy) Isotome, *Isotoma axillaris*, which grows as tufts in cracks between the rocks.

We returned to the picnic area where we gathered in the shade of the new shelter for afternoon tea and to record what we had seen during the afternoon.

Euan Moore

Birds

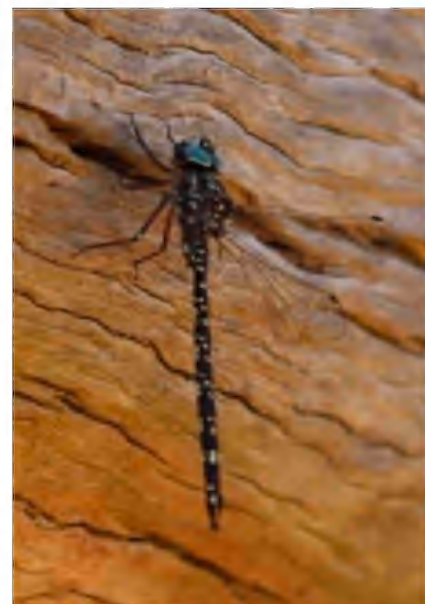
Common Name	Scientific Name	Count
Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	4
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	1
Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	2
White-throated Treecreeper	<i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>	3
White-eared Honeyeater	<i>Nesoptilotis leucotis</i>	1
Brown-headed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	5
Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	1
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Caligavis chrysops</i>	2
Spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	5
Weebill	<i>Smicronis brevirostris</i>	1
Yellow Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	1
Buff-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	5
Grey Shrike Thrush	<i>Calluricincla harmonica</i>	1
Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	5
Scarlet Robin	<i>Petroica boodang</i>	3

Butterflies

Common Name	Scientific Name	Count
Cabbage White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	10-20
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa kershawi</i>	2
Common Brown	<i>Heteronympha merope</i>	50+
Marbled Xenica	<i>Geitoneura klugii</i>	10-20
Common Grass-blue	<i>Zizina otis labradus</i>	5-10



Painted Lady, *Vanessa kershawi*, feeding on Sticky Everlasting, *Xerochrysum viscosum*.
Photo: Euan Moore



Swamp Darner
Austroaeschna parvistigma
Photo: Lou Citroen

Dragonflies

Common Name	Scientific Name	Count
Swamp Darner	<i>Austroaeschna parvistigma</i>	1-5

Plants in flower

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
Rock Fern	<i>Chielanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	Beside granite outcrops
Sweet Vernal	* <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Widespread throughout
Finger Rush	<i>Juncus subsecundus</i>	
Yellow Rush-lily	<i>Tricoryne elatior</i>	
Lightwood	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	
Hill Flat-pea	<i>Platylobium montanum</i> ssp. <i>montanum</i>	
Stinking Pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	
Magenta Stork's-bill	<i>Pelargonium rodneyanum</i>	
Sheep Sorrel	* <i>Acetosella vulgaris</i>	Introduced
Grassland Wood-sorrel	<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	
Wood Sorrel	<i>Oxalis</i> sp	Larger plant, introduced?
St John's Wort	* <i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	
Small St John's Wort	<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	
Messmate Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Heavy flowering
Pink Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus augustissimus</i>	
Sweet Hound's-tongue	<i>Hackelia suaveolens</i>	
Forget-me-not	* <i>Myosotis laxa</i>	
Common Centaury	* <i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	
Scarlet Pimpernel	* <i>Lysimachia arvensis</i>	
Yellowish Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia luteola</i>	
Tall Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i> ssp. <i>stricta</i>	
Annual Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia gracilentia</i> .	
Rock (Showy) Isotome	<i>Isotoma axillaris</i>	
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	
New Holland Daisy	<i>Vittadinia cuneata</i>	New for Mt. Alexander
Cat's Ear	* <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	
Cotton Fireweed	<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	
Annual Fireweed	<i>Senecio glomeratus</i>	

* = Introduced species.

The following day, Geraldine Harris returned to follow up some sightings and was able to these add to the above list

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
Austral Hound's-tongue	<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>	
Prostrate Flat-pea	<i>Platylobium montanum</i> <i>subsp. prostratum</i>	
Pale Rush	<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	
Rough Fireweed	<i>Senecio hispidulus</i>	
Woolly New Holland Daisy	<i>Vittadinia gracilis</i>	
Dandelion	* <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	
Common Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Flowering, large patch to left of path on way out
Austral Indigo	<i>Indigophora australis</i>	Not flowering
Small Poranthera	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>	Flowering
Showy Violet	<i>Viola bentonicifolia</i> subsp. <i>bentonicifolia</i>	Not flowering



Stinking Pennywort,
Hydrocotyl laxiflora



Common Everlasting,
Chrysocephalum apiculatum

5 photos from
Geraldine Harris

Right:
Rough Fireweed,
Senecio hispidulus



Right:
Australian Hounds-
tongue,
Cynoglossum australe



Right:
Small Poranthera,
Poranthera
microphylla



Observations

From Euan Moore these 3 observations were captured on 8th Feb 2024 at Mt. Moorul / Rock of Ages near Maldon.



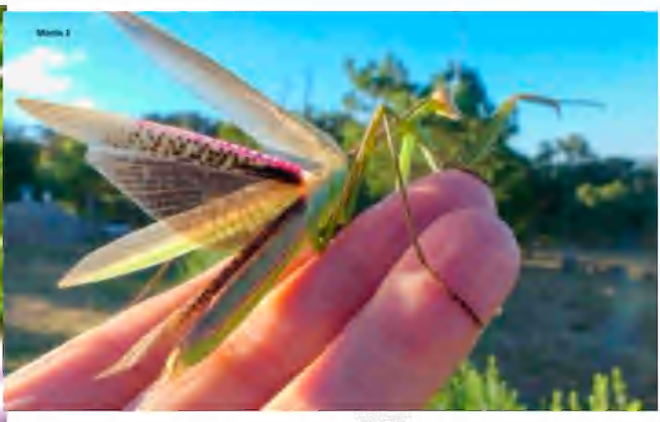
Above: Southern Boobook, *Ninox boobook*

Above right: Yellow-banded Day-moth, *Eutrichopidia latinus*. Female laying eggs.

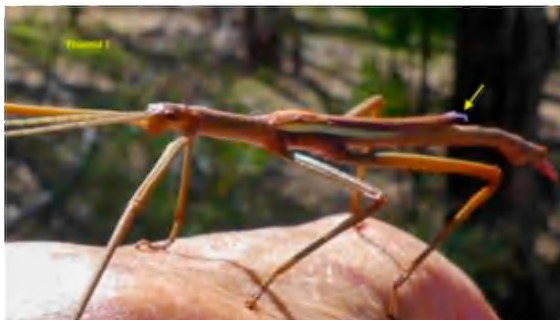
Right: Cunningham's Skink, *Egernia cunninghamii*. This was quite a large individual, >30cm long



While Mez Woodward was photographing her close encounters of another kind. The purple-winged Mantis, *Tenodera australasiae* (photos 1 & 2) was hunting on its favourite *Westringia* bush.



Mez also spotted this Spur-footed Phasmid, *Didymuria violescens*, another purple-winged insect. A splash of the purple wing color at the end of the wing can be seen in photo 'Phasmid 1'. Identification of this species is by the spurs on the hind legs (photo Phasmid 2) but only on the male. His tibia are also fatter than on the female.



Roadside Clean-up

Geoff Harris

Our first Roadside Clean-up for 2024 was held on Monday 12 February. Weather conditions were good and the collection was completed by 10:30. We collected about 330 litres of rubbish (12 half-filled 55 litre bin bags). There was a noticeable, and welcome, reduction in the number of cans and bottles, presumably due to the introduction of Victoria's container deposit scheme on 1st November 2023. Not many plants in flowers, but there were some lovely Magenta Stork's-bill, *Pelargonium rodneyanum* (right). Thanks to Brian, Sue, Alison, Jenny, Peter, Jan & Euan.



Cartography Community Mapping

Jase Haysom

I have placed a new map on the CCM site --Metcalf Nature Conservation Reserve
https://ccmaps.au/metcalf_ncr/metcalf_ncr.htm

The map prints at A4 and is available in the usual range of formats. The flora differs from that on most CCM maps (see notes on webpage) and I found the ambience noticeably different. The area would serve well for a contour training session with its textbook ridge track of about 3 km and textbook spur track of about 1 km. The reserve is accessible by road from Metcalfe in the north and Kyneton in the south.

CFNC Excursion to the Grampians in Spring.

Geoff Harris

When a possible Club excursion to the Grampians in September was mentioned at our monthly meeting there was a very positive indication of interest, so we are now proceeding to the next stage and are now ready to receive bookings. Please consider the information provided below and, if you are interested, send me an email

expressing your desire to attend to secure your spot. There will be a maximum number of places available (probably 20 -30 depending on the final mix of accommodation options requested) and bookings will be accepted in order of receipt.

When: The weekend, from 3pm Friday 13th Sep to 3pm Sunday 15th Sep.

Where: The Northern Grampians, based at 'Old Dadswell Town' accommodation village, which is 5 kilometres north of Dadswells Bridge on the Western Highway. It is about a 2 1/4 hours drive from Castlemaine, on sealed, quiet country roads.

Accommodation: 'Old Dadswell Town' has 5 two bedroom (one queen & two single) and 2 one bedroom (queen) self-contained cabins. The facilities are quirky, but very clean, with a common room large enough for shared meals and meetings (with an open log fire). The whole place would be ours alone for the weekend. It is on 280 acres, has a lovely outlook to the Grampians range, is adjacent to the Grampians National Park and is only a 15 minute drive from some excellent wildflower and walk locations including Heatherly Quarry, Beehive Falls, Golton Gorge, Mount Zero, Flat Rock, Hollow Mountain and Mount Stapleton. It is 25 minutes from Halls Gap, Stawell and Horsham.

Here is a link to Old Dadswell Town's website -

- <https://www.olddadswelltown.com.au/index.html>

Cost: Cost per person for two nights shared accommodation (Fri & Sat) & a barbecue meal on the Friday night will be in the \$100 - \$125 range. Linen, crockery and cutlery supplied. Final cost can't be determined until bookings are received and room configuration worked out.

Itinerary: Friday - check-in available from 3pm; barbecue dinner with salads from 6pm; speaker at 7:30pm.

Saturday - breakfast in cabin (your responsibility). Excursions to wildflower sites depart at 9:30am and return by 4:30pm (bring your own lunch, snacks, drinks and chair - we will have a picnic lunch); shared meal in the common room at 6pm (please bring a casserole or salad or dessert to share - each cabin and the common room have refrigerators); speaker at 7:30pm.

Sunday - breakfast in cabin (your responsibility); excursions to wildflower sites depart at 9:30am and return by 2:30pm (bring your own lunch, snacks, drinks and chair - we will have a picnic lunch); depart for home at your leisure.

Note: you are also welcome to spend more time relaxing at 'Old Dadswell Town' in lieu of some excursions if desired.

So: If you are interested or have any queries, please send an email to geoffreyharris@fastmail.fm (or phone me on 0418 392183). Please indicate your accommodation preference (share queen bedroom / share twin bedroom / single) so that room configuration can be determined and a firm booking can be made (a deposit will be needed once your booking is confirmed).



Grasstrees in flower, *Xanthorrhoea australis*. Photo: Geoff Harris



Red Beak Orchid,
Pyrorchis nigricans
Photo: Geoff Harris

PS: You will probably have noticed that there have been some serious bushfires in the Grampians this last week. Unfortunately, they burnt through much of the 'Old Dadswell Town' bush and adjacent National Park, however not any of the accommodation infrastructure has been damaged and operations will be continuing 'as normal'. By September, hopefully, there should be some interesting regrowth in the burnt areas - after the February 2014 fires there was a profusion of Grasstree, *Xanthorrhoea australis* and Red Beak Orchid, *Pyrorchis nigricans* (left) flowers in the Spring. Many of the nearby wildflower and walk locations we intend to visit have not been burnt by these fires.

SEANA Camps 2024

The South East Australian Naturalists' Association (SEANA) organises two camps each year where Field Naturalist groups from around SE Australia gather to explore a new region and meet fellow naturalists. The host club organises a range of activities lead by their local experts. As it becomes available, information about these camps' activities, registration forms and accommodation options are sent as email updates to members and posted on our website's "Activities" pages where there are also links to SEANA and club contacts for further information.

SEANA Autumn Camp: Friday Apr 19th – Monday Apr 22nd, Phillip Island, hosted by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Enquiries Email - admin@fncv.org.au

SEANA Spring Camp: Friday 25th – Monday 27th October, Marysville, hosted by the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club Inc. Enquiries: Email – rncseana@gmail.com

Update on the Buruli Ulcer – *Mycobacterium ulcerans*

Dr. Christina McCowan gave a presentation in Nov 2022 (newsletter Dec 2022) describing that the mode of transmission of this bacterium didn't seem to be direct human to human contact but that possums were involved. Recent research at the Doherty Institute shows that mosquitoes are infected from biting possums that carry the bacteria. Mozzies spread it to humans through their bite. Since the early 2000s, Buruli ulcer has been increasingly recorded in coastal Victoria including in suburbs around Melbourne and Geelong. The message to reduce the risk of infection from this bacterial infection and other viral species transmitted by mosquitoes is to:

Stop its spread by stopping mozzies breeding and to protect yourself from bites.

Fallen Trees – The Agony and Ecstasy

At the December 2023 Members Meeting, I presented a short story recounting the agony and ecstasy of when a perfectly healthy Yellow Box tree, *E. melliodora*, fell over because the roots had become so water logged during the 2022 floods, that the tree could no longer support its weight. What a mighty fall for a mighty tree – heartbreaking. But when the aerial growth and some major limbs were cleared what was left were a couple of large boughs hanging in and over the dam water. Over the next months a variety of water birds started to frequent and for some almost take up

permanent residence on these boughs and the water's edge. Common birds for this area but birds which had not been seen at our dam before. Many hours spent watching the activity from the veranda with the proverbial cup of tea in hand.

Jill Williams

Common Name – Water Birds	Scientific Name
Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>
Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>
Grey Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>
Australasian Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>
White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>
White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>
Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>
Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>
Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>



Pacific Black Duck,
Anas superciliosa



Australian Wood Ducks
Chenonetta jubata



Left: White-faced Heron,
Egretta novaehollandiae
Right: White-necked Heron,
Ardea pacifica



Left: Little Black Cormorant,
Phalacrocorax sulcirostris.
Right: Little Pied Cormorant,
Phalacrocorax melanoleucos

COMING EVENTS

AGM and Monthly General Meeting: Friday 8th March, 7.30 pm,
Uniting Church Fellowship Room, Lyttleton St

Annual General Meeting:

The 2024 AGM will be held before the usual monthly meeting, March 8th. The AGM agenda will include the Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report for 2023, and the election of office bearers and committee members for 2024. All positions on the committee will be open, so you are strongly encouraged to consider joining the committee. Members with a range of skills and interests are very welcome. For more information, please contact the President or one of the committee members. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary and completed forms should reach the Secretary (castlemainefnc@hotmail.com) before the meeting.

Monthly Talk: Friday March 8th.

Speaker: Trent Nelson (Cultural Fire and Heritage Coordinator, Loddon Mallee, DEECA) will speak about "Cultural burning program in the Murray Goldfields district". Trent is a member of DEECA's Forest Fire Management team in addition to his role coordinating several Cultural Burn Programs across the Loddon Mallee region. Several cultural burns in our area are planned, to be conducted by DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) in conjunction with FFM. Cultural burning is called Djandak Wi in the Dja Dja Wurrung language, meaning 'Country Fire'. It is cool, slow burning to stimulate the growth of native plants and increase biodiversity.

Djandak Wi holds significant spiritual, social and ceremonial importance for Dja Dja Wurrung people. We will visit the site of one of these burns later in the year.

Our guest speaker will follow the AGM. This month there will be no Observations segment. If you have interesting observations, with photos if available, please forward them by email to the newsletter editors at newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com by 29th March.

Excursion:

Saturday March 9th, 1.30pm, "Significant Trees in the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens" - Join us for a walk in the gardens to remember and celebrate George Broadway. We will follow the route mapped by George for his brochure highlighting the interesting collection of trees in the gardens.

Leaders: Euan Moore and Peter Turner

Meet:

We will meet at the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens (not at The Octopus) by the Rose Garden adjacent to the southern Downes Road car park, which is where the Significant Trees walk begins. Saturday afternoons are a busy time in the Gardens, so allow time to park further away.

Bring: Water, sun protection, chairs and afternoon tea.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club PROGRAM

Monthly meetings are held in the Uniting Church Hall (UCH), Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, commencing at 7.30pm.

Members and visitors are invited to share their interesting observations at these meetings. Please email any photos to illustrate your report as JPEG file(s) to Euan Moore (calamanthus5@bigpond.com) by noon on the day of the meeting.

Excursions (Saturday following the monthly meeting) leave from the car park opposite the Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm unless stated otherwise.

See 'Coming Events' page for more details about March events.

Fri March 8th, Meeting 7.30pm (UCH). AGM. Guest speaker: Trent Nelson (Cultural Fire and Heritage Coordinator, Loddon Mallee, DEECA) "Cultural burning program in the Murray Goldfields district".

Sat March 9th, Excursion 1.30pm. "Significant Trees in the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens" - a walk in the gardens following the route mapped by George Broadway to enjoy and learn about the interesting collection of trees.

Fri April 12th, Meeting 7.30pm (UCH). Guest speaker: Tim Entwistle (Past Director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens) "Evergreen: the Botanical Life of a Plant Punk"

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

Castlemaine Naturalist - email newsletter material to: newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com

* Deadline for the April edition: **29th March**

Club website (Webmaster: Ron Wescott) <https://castlemaine-field-naturalists.org.au>

Subscriptions (Membership forms on CFNC website, membership fees due 1st April)

Ordinary membership: Single \$35, Family \$50

Pensioner or student: Single \$25, Family \$30

Subscription includes the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist.

Committee

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